



April 24, 2015

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## *Preserving DATCP & DNR Boards*

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*The governor's budget provision regarding Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Board has been taken out of the budget by the JFC and the board will keep its current policymaking authority.*

### **Appeal to Preserve DATCP & DNR Boards**

Along with nine colleagues in the legislature, we sent a joint letter to Rep. John Nygren, Co-chair of the Joint Finance Committee, the committee charged with the review of all state appropriations and revenues. The letter requested they reject the provision proposed by the Governor to change the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Board to strictly advisory in nature.



The governor's budget provision regarding Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Board has now been taken out of the budget by the JFC and the board will keep its current policymaking authority. This proposed change was one I firmly opposed; removing this policy change from the state budget is a good start to creating a better budget for the people of Wisconsin, the board is crucial in providing input and oversight to the direction of the state's agricultural economy."

The first series of votes on the budget took place April 15th by the Joint Finance Committee, which will spend the next several weeks going through the Governor's proposed state budget. It was announced that the DATCP and DNR board changes would be removed from the budget, along with some other policy items.

I'm pleased to see the JFC made these changes, and happy that I had an opportunity to have advocated on behalf of the constituents I heard from on this issue. The budget is still a work in progress, and I will continue to work on making it a fair budget for all of Wisconsin".

These executive sessions typically occur over the course of several weeks. If you would like to provide input regarding the state budget, I encourage you to do so. Please do not hesitate to [contact me](#) with any of your comments, questions, or concerns.

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## Protecting Wisconsin's Waterways & Helping Wisconsin Farmers

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The Assembly was back in session last Tuesday April 14th. During which, legislation was voted and passed on consumer and environmental protection as well as legislation that addresses issues related to increasingly large and heavy farm equipment operating on roadways in Wisconsin.

One of the main pieces of legislation that we passed was Senate Bill 15 which seeks to ban microbeads in Wisconsin. In a bipartisan effort to prevent water pollution, I voted to eliminate microbeads in consumer products. Microbeads are small, non-biodegradable plastic particles, which have been used as a primary element in personal care products including exfoliating soap, scrubs, shower gels, and toothpaste. As the beads transfer from the product into the pipes of your home, they reach water treatment plants that can't filter out the tiny beads causing them to be released into Lake Michigan and other local water systems.

This is common sense legislation as this material can be safely and adequately replaced with natural, biodegradable and effective alternative ingredients such as sea salt crystals, and oatmeal, I am pleased that we're addressing this public health concern in a bipartisan fashion to help keep our water clear of this harmful substance.

The State Assembly gave AB 15/SB 15 final legislative approval and it now goes to the governor for his signature.

Another important piece of legislation that we passed was Assembly Bill 113, a bill that improves a law passed last year that allowed farmers to legally operate their farm machinery on roadways. Farmers in Wisconsin are now one step closer to improving and refining how overweight and over-length equipment and machinery can be moved in the state.

The bill makes more than 20 adjustments to the Implements of Husbandry (IOH) law, including:

- Clarifies in state statute that IOH with rubber tracks can legally operate on Wisconsin roadways.
- To alleviate the potential issuance of thousands of permits across the state, it authorizes an IOH or (agricultural commercial motor vehicle) Ag-CMV being legally operated with a permit to cross any intersecting highway under the jurisdiction of the maintaining authority that issued the permit.
- Provides the same weight, length, width and height limitations for transporting IOH by trailer or semitrailer from farm-to-farm, from field-to-field, or from farm-to-field to the same extent as if the IOH were being operated on the roadway.
- The special axle weight exemption given to Category B planting, tillage, cultivating and harvesting IOH is also given to Ag-CMV's that directly distribute feed to livestock, or directly apply fertilizer, lime, spray or seeds, but not manure, to a farm field.
- Ag-CMV's that have the capability to directly apply manure to a field, but are unable to due to field conditions, will be able to park on a road and off-load the manure to another piece of equipment for application, and still retain Ag-CMV status.

The bill passed the State Assembly unanimously on April 14. The bill now moves on to Governor Scott Walker's desk for his expected approval.

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## *What's Happening in Madison...*

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Friday April 17th, the Joint Finance Committee (JFC) completed its second executive session of the 2015-17 budget. The following is a [list of issue areas](#) taken up by the Committee and voted on. These executive sessions are when each individual issue in the governor's budget proposal is discussed and voted on by the committee.

I recently toured the Wisconsin Operating Engineers Training Center in Coloma, WI. This is where they do all their training for major construction equipment. The training starts in the classroom, then moves to simulators, and finally the actual machines: cranes, bulldozers, excavators etc. It's a giant, 400-acre facility with well over 100 pieces of heavy equipment. It was great to have the opportunity to visit.

Additionally, I had the opportunity to participate in the Wisconsin Grilled Cheese Championship. I was one of the judges; There were over 150 entries and I judged four categories. Tasted 52 grilled cheese sandwiches. Over 1000 people had attended the event. It was a beautiful day for it.

This week was the 2015 Posters in the Rotunda at the State Capitol. This event celebrates the cutting edge research being conducted by the talented students at each of our institutions. I was able to stop and talk with with the student researchers on hand to discuss their work; including some students from nearby [UW-Platteville](#).

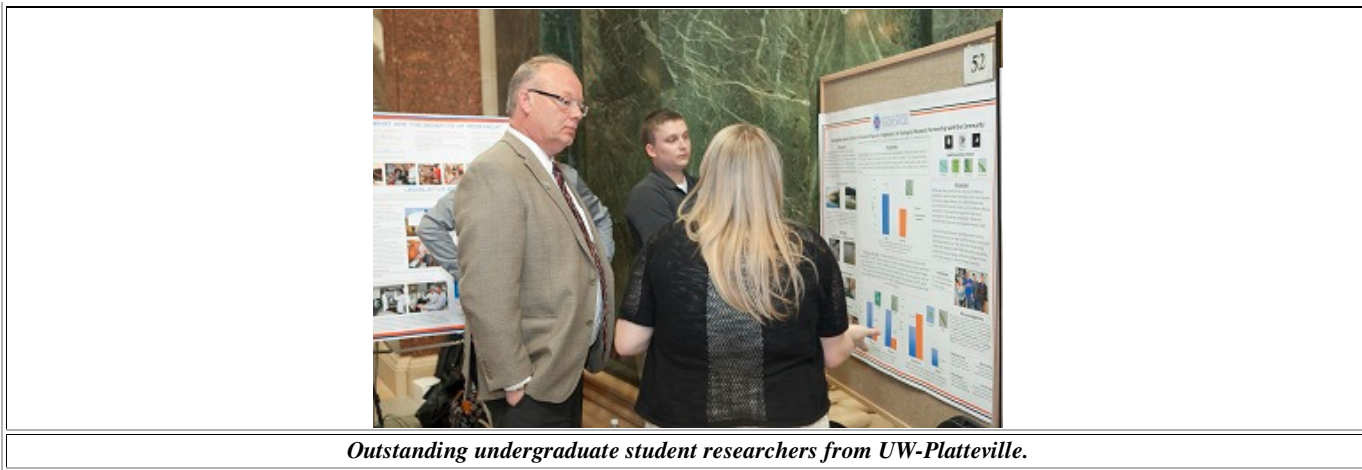
If you ever find yourself in Madison or your group plans to visit the State Capitol, I hope that you can stop by my office, 304 North. It is a beautiful facility full of history. I'd definitely encourage you to take a tour someday - the Capitol and surrounding area would make a great day trip for the family.



*Touring the WI Operating Engineers Training Center.*



*Judging with me were Abby Despina, Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board; Zoey Brooks, Alice in Dairyland and Michelle Corolla, FOX 47 Anchor.*



*Outstanding undergraduate student researchers from UW-Platteville.*

Sincerely,



As always, if you have any comments or thoughts regarding the subject of this E-Update, please feel free to contact me.

If you would like to be removed from future mailings, [email me](#) and ask to unsubscribe.

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